

VZCZCXYZ0000
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHSB #0532/01 1821212
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 011212Z JUL 09
FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4668
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 2923
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 3042
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 1474
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 2305
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 2672
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 3090
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 5533
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK
RHMFISS/EUCOM POLAD VAIHINGEN GE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 2220
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L HARARE 000532

SIPDIS

AF/S FOR B.WALCH
DRL FOR N. WILETT
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR J. HARMON AND L. DOBBINS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/01/2019
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [PHUM](#) [EFIN](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR PRESSES BITI ON REFORMS

Classified By: Ambassador James D. McGee for reason 1.4 (d)

INTRODUCTION

¶1. (C) The Ambassador met with Minister of Finance Tendai Biti on June 30 at Biti's request. Biti requested details of the US\$73 million pledged by President Obama to Prime Minister Tsvangirai at their recent White House meeting. The meeting evolved into a discussion of Zimbabwe's lack of progress on reforms which was impeding consideration of further U.S. assistance to Zimbabwe. END INTRODUCTION.

¶2. (C) Biti asked the Ambassador whether the US\$73 million was fungible and could be used for necessary goods and services (not directly to government) and thereby as indirect budgetary support. The Ambassador responded in the negative; the money would be restricted and most was pledged for HIV/AIDS and governance.

¶3. (C) Biti expressed concern about government finances and the survival of the government without foreign assistance. The Ambassador praised Biti for his efforts at the Ministry, and noted that the IMF was similarly impressed with his efforts (Septel), but told him directly that Washington was reluctant to expand assistance until there were demonstrable improvements in the areas of human rights and rule of law. While there had been significant progress since last year -- the MDC was in government, Morgan Tsvangirai was Prime Minister, and Biti was Finance Minister -- Washington and the world continued to read reports of arrests, beatings, and land seizures. That Gideon Gono was still Governor of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe and Johannes Tomana was still Attorney General symbolized the lack of power of the MDC in government and raised questions about its ability to push a reform agenda. The Ambassador emphasized that the exit of Gono and Tomana from the scene would be very important in assuring observers that the GOZ was serious about reform.

¶4. (C) Biti acknowledged the Ambassador's points. He

lamented that nobody (read Tsvangirai and his inner circle) was driving the reform agenda. He said most ZANU-PF ministers were aware of the liability represented by Gono in terms of receiving assistance but were unwilling to join the MDC in urging his removal because of fear of Mugabe.

COMMENT

15. (C) While Tsvangirai and Biti have heard similar messages in their recent travels to Washington and Europe; the Ambassador took some of the diplomatic gloss off and spoke to Biti directly as a friend. Biti took on board the message. As finance minister, however, his plate is overflowing and, as capable as we believe he is, he is not in a position to coordinate and push the governance reform agenda.

16. (C) The MDC has had a long-term strategy -- to achieve constitutional and electoral reform and strengthen itself for a new election. It has been less concerned about human rights improvements and rule of law reforms than have the U.S. and other western countries. Tsvangirai, therefore, has so far chosen to work with Mugabe and accept incremental reform. But in a sign that the MDC is becoming frustrated with ZANU-PF, Deputy Prime Minister Thokazani Khupe on June 30 made a speech that was sharply critical of ZANU-PF's failure to treat the MDC as an equal partner and to carry out the terms of the Global Political Agreement (GPA). On June 30, Tsvangirai issued a statement that reviewed his recent trip and also endorsed Khupe's statement. He noted concerns in the U.S. and Europe about the delay in fully implementing the GPA and, without referring to Mugabe or ZANU-PF, stated that "those parties and individuals that are blocking the full implementation of the GPA are blocking national progress and international assistance." He called for the immediate resolution of outstanding issues. It remains to be seen, however, whether Tsvangirai is willing to stand up to Mugabe and go beyond rhetoric. END COMMENT.

MC GEE